

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CENTER FOR SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

495-1000 8132

June 15, 1987

- 1400 Center

John F. Kennedy School of Government
79 John F. Kennedy Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

Dr. Daniel Ellsberg

Dear Dr. Ellsberg:

I enclose a document that my friend and fellow psychologist, Margaret Brenman-Gibson, thought would interest you: A psychological study of the final 48 hours of the Cuban missile crisis. My thesis is this: That the standard interpretations of this event, from participants and analysts alike, are much too cognitive, too bound up with the micro-economic, rational-actor "psychology" that has so bewildered me, since I entered this field about three years ago. I have tried to avoid, at all costs, being reductively psychological. I want to speak too the people who speak most authoritatively about risk of nuclear war, not at them. But I have also tried my best to suggest that the key lesson of the Cuban missile crisis is that it was resolved peacefully, with only one American death, because leaders on both sides became powerfully filled in the last two days with the fear of inadvertent nuclear war. They were losing control of the situation and they knew it, and this is why they threw in the towel. This manuscript will be revised next month, in accordance with a great many interviews I have conducted in the past several months with former members of President Kennedy's EXCOMM, but also with others, such as Ray Cline, Ray Garthoff, Bill Hyland, Abe Chayes and others. I plan to write an epilogue that says two things, mainly: That the hypothesis is confirmed--fear of inadvertent nuclear war was the reason the crisis ended when, and as, it did; but also that there was a significant minority in the EXCOMM that felt none--I mean absolutely none!--of this fear. Maxwell Taylor, speaking just before his recent death, Douglas Dillon and Paul Nitze have all said that they were amazed at the fear in their colleagues and that they have never understood in the least. To these people, there were no risks, and the US ought to have bombed the missile sites immediately, and this would have provoked no response from the Soviets, simply because of the roughly 5000-200 or so gap between the number of strategic weapons at the disposal of the two superpowers.

I send this to you now, along with this request that you and I arrange to talk about the crisis, for several reasons. First, as you will note in my manuscript, I deal only very slightly with the Soviet side of the equation. I had no choice. I was told by such people as Garthoff, Taubman and Horelick that all we really know for sure is that Khrushchev was scared in pretty much the way, and to the extent, he describes in his memoirs. I do draw on this material, as best I can. But I have heard from Scott Armstrong at the National Security Archive (who was instrumental in helping me put together a briefing notebook of 500 pages or so, in preparation for a conference we recently held on the missile crisis) that you believe that more can be said about the Soviet fear of inadvertence, of losing control of the situation, than has heretofore seen light of day. In particular, he mentioned what he called

a "firefight" at one of the SAM sites in Cuba, during which Cubans and Soviets were killed, as the Cubans tried to overrun the base, or perhaps did briefly overrun it, as the Cubans tried their damndest to provoke a war between the superpowers, rather than allow the missiles to be removed from Cuba. If true, then this provides even more evidence that the Soviets too, like the Americans, were having all sorts of problems retaining control of the situation. As your old boss Bob McNamara told me last month, the missile crisis proves to him that crisis management, as some sort of technology for managing crises in which nuclear weapons are involved, is just nuts. This new revelation, if true, would prove that there is an important symmetry to the fear of inadvertent nuclear war in a crisis.

Although Scott did not say so, I have heard from others that you are the source of this information about the fight between Cubans and Soviets in Cuba, in October, 1962. In asking around, I found no help whatsoever from the EXCOMM people, who seem not to be familiar with it at all. Finally, quite by accident, I came upon the source--yourself. I asked for, and received, permission to see the rough take of the WGBH special "Nuclear Age" episode on the missile crisis, just to help prepare myself for the conference I organized on the event back in March, down in the Florida Keys. I just wanted to see what they had done, and in return I have shared with them our briefing book and, when it is cleared through all the participants, I will give them the edited transcript of our meeting as well. Of course, I saw you describe the episode in Cuba at one of the SAM sites. I was so flabbergasted by this that I asked Alex George, who is a kind of father figure to me in this new field, to tell me about you, because I had heard from Alex once that you and he had worked together many years ago at RAND. I did not tell him why I wanted to find out about you. He told me this: That you were, and remain, one of the most scrupulous, honest, careful and sensitive people he has ever met and, whatever you say must be taken very seriously. This was corroborated by Margaret, who attended a conference this past weekend out in the Berkshires at which I presented the results of some of my research on the missile crisis. The basic finding was that you are not only reliable but that you really are the sort of person I always thought you were when I was a student in Ann Arbor in the early 70s, ^{and a hero} you performed the supremely patriotic act of this century by informing the American people, via the Pentagon Papers, about the activities of our government in Indo-China. I say all this because the revelation about the SAM site fight was so shocking, and I could get no help whatsoever from anyone on trying to track it down to verify it. None whatsoever, and we are talking about the cognoscenti of the field, and almost all of the living EXCOMM people. And so I come to you.

I want you to understand my purpose: I want to talk to you about the Cuban missile crisis. That is all. I am not a journalist, I am not interested in the least in "scoops." I am trying to figure out why the Cuban missile crisis ended without a war, I have tried to integrate into my analyses some of my psychological background, and I have come to some preliminary conclusions. These involve chiefly fear of inadvertent nuclear war. But I have been unable, simply because I am so ignorant, to carry my argument to the Soviet side. And I don't have to tell you how important it is to do so. Everytime I or some

of my other colleagues who believe that the real nuclear fear ought to be inadvertence--Murphy's Law--talk or write about this, we inevitably hear: *from who? 8 p.m.?*
 "Sure, but the Soviets are not like us. They respond only to cold hard facts, *show you*
 like being very far behind in the arms race." If any light--any light--
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crisis that emphasizes their own susceptibility to this sort of fear, I think
 a blow might be struck for sanity in the analysis of nuclear crises, and risk
 of nuclear war. Your piece of information, if true, would help to do just
 this, and I would like to talk about it with you.

Moreover, I myself have some information that, if you have an abiding
 interest in the crisis, may be of some considerable interest to you, and
 which points us in the very same direction as your revelation. It is this:
 Dean Rusk told me not long ago that on the evening of October 27, 1962,
 President Kennedy ordered him to place a phone call to Andrew Cordier at
 Columbia (but formerly director of protocol at the UN) and tell him this:
 That he was to hold onto a message, to the effect that, if a sign was given
 from the White House, via Rusk, U. Thant was to be asked to go immediately
on Radio and Television announcing a plan for a public trade of American missiles
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 than risk a war in Cuba. This is certainly not a policy, but it shows the
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over the Cuban missiles was too risky. He would rather risk impeachment, ?
or the collapse of NATO, so it appears, than escalation to nuclear war over
 40 or so missiles on the island of Cuba. But of course, this is just what you
 would expect from a man who was so keenly aware that events were spiraling
 out of control, as he told Khrushchev in his cable of October 28 accepting
 Khrushchev's own acceptance of the deal--the private "trade" and the public
pledge not to invade Cuba, for getting the missiles out of Cuba. So, you can
 see that as new information comes to light, it all seems to be pointing in the
 same direction--toward fear of inadvertence, and what it might lead to. There
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Not only will I be revising the manuscript I have enclosed, but a colleague
 and I--a graduate student in the Harvard Government Department--are writing
 a second book on the whole crisis, using our rich interview material. I
 would dearly like to include you in our array of interviewees and, maybe even
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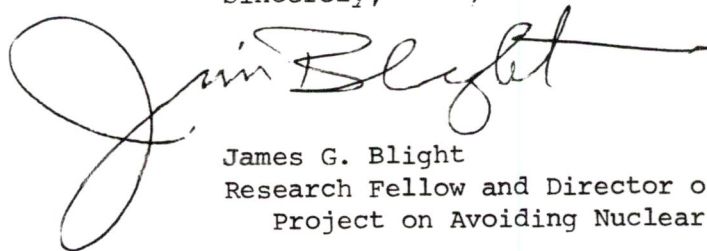
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informed by over a quarter-century of ^{Your} immersion in problems of national security. It would be the visit of a junior colleague to his senior, if you like. Or, if you will be on the East Coast over the summer, I would be happy to meet you nearby. I seem to recall that you sometimes show up on the Cape in August, when Bob Lifton, John Mack, Margaret and the others get together in the spirit of Erik Erikson, and often with the Eriksons. Perhaps something like that would provide an opportunity to get together.

But enough. I'll look forward to hearing from you. I don't mind saying that you used to be one of my heroes, when I was an undergraduate. I guess this fact worked unconsciously during the year I was a student here at the Kennedy School, 1983-1984, because the first term paper I wrote took its epigram and title from your introduction to E.P. Thompson's Protest and Survive, on the "revolt of the hostages." Now, it appears, I may with luck have an opportunity to transform hero worship into something like a real and mutual exchange of views on an event in which I am presently immersed, and in which you actually participated. I hope it works out.

All the best.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "James G. Blight". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, looping initial "J" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

James G. Blight
Research Fellow and Director of the
Project on Avoiding Nuclear War

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* Yet JFK acted on Oct 27 (except for cowardly attack on SAMs) as if he had no fear of losing control - evidence for the next 24 hours at least; if he had none (like Nitze or Taylor) what would he have done differently? (did one SAM site, inadvertently). Why was this? and why did he act differently? (as if he was about to lose control unless he withdrew)

a "firefight" at one of the SAM sites in Cuba, during which Cubans and Soviets were killed, as the Cubans tried to overrun the base, or perhaps did briefly overrun it, as the Cubans tried their damndest to provoke a war between the superpowers, rather than allow the missiles to be removed from Cuba. If true, then this provides even more evidence that the Soviets too, like the Americans, were having all sorts of problems retaining control of the situation. As your old boss Bob McNamara told me last month, the missile crisis proves to him that crisis management, as some sort of technology for managing crises in which nuclear weapons are involved, is just nuts. This new revelation, if true, would prove that there is an important symmetry to the fear of inadvertent nuclear war in a crisis. *more!* ?

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? who? (us. JFK school?)

of my other colleagues who believe that the real nuclear fear ought to be inadvertence--Murphy's Law--talk or write about this, we inevitably hear: *from who? explain? show you are!*

Heaven, our crying and threats and bluffs are safe. "Sure, but the Soviets are not like us. They respond only to cold hard facts, like being very far behind in the arms race." If any light--any light--could be brought to bear on the Soviet motivation for ending the Cuban missile crisis that emphasizes their own susceptibility to this sort of fear, I think a blow might be struck for sanity in the analysis of nuclear crises, and risk of nuclear war. Your piece of information, if true, would help to do just this, and I would like to talk about it with you.

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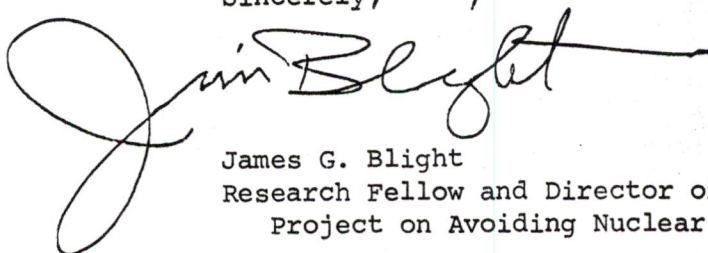
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All the best.

Sincerely,

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James G. Blight
Research Fellow and Director of the
Project on Avoiding Nuclear War

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Executive Director
(617) 495-8132

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August 29, 1987

Dr. Daniel Ellsberg

Dear Dan:

I can't discuss instantaneously or alternately before reading without revealing source of info.

My wife Janet told me last night that she had a very tough time keeping her conversation with you down to about an hour, and that, furthermore, she thought the conversation had to end quite prematurely. I am not surprised. After close to five hours on the horn with you the other day, and after taking--believe it or not--over ^{twenty} two pages of notes during the conversation, I still felt that we had only scratched the surface. I came away with one absolutely certain conclusion: That you are totally convinced that the Cuban takeover occurred and that this event was crucial, perhaps even decisive, in the resolution of the Cuban missile crisis. As I told you then, and as I suppose must have been obvious from your very close reading of my manuscript, the event you believe occurred on October 26-27, 1962 would indeed explain a good deal that I have been unable to account for. That is exactly the event that would, or should, have happened in order to make the quite unexpected and amicable resolution of the missile crisis occur. It is the missing piece of the puzzle, or at any rate, the most important missing piece I have heard of. And that is saying something, because as you are aware, the Cuban missile crisis has lately assumed all the drama and immediacy of contemporary affairs, due to a whole series of revelations lately come to light: From Rusk, from the transcription of the secret tapes of the EXCOMM meetings of October 27, and now this, the Ellsberg Revelation, potentially the most significant of all.

I take it that Janet shared with you some of the results of my preliminary conversations with Joe Nye and Dave Welch about bringing you out to Harvard, to CSIA and the Kennedy School, to break this news to the public. So, forgive me if I go over some familiar ground, but I think it is vitally important to get straight just what I think we ought to do, and why.

First, let me recapitulate the point on which all of agree-- you, me, Joe and Dave. First, if true, this revelation will do at least two things: It will give us the first interesting insight into the Soviet calculations in the CMC since Khrushchev's memoirs - *which said...* were brought to light in the early 70s; and second, it will in fundamental ways revolutionize our understanding of nuclear danger in the CMC and of those factors which actually allowed us to slip out of October 1962 without a war. There was no argument on this whatever. I regard this as basic: That a group of highly intelligent and well informed people on the CMC believe that the Ellsberg Revelation is terribly important. Second, if true, there really is only one place at which such information ought to be revealed, and that is here, at the Kennedy School, where Graham wrote his book, where the May Group debated the crisis all through the 60s, where International Security is published, and in the pages of which virtually every interesting new revelation on the CMC has first seen light of day and, finally, where at present more work on the CMC is going on than in the next half dozen most active institutions put together. (This year, we will have a working group meeting every other week solely to discuss and evaluate the new evidence coming to light about the crisis. This group will have nearly a dozen and a half scholars who are true-blue junkies of the CMC, led by the greatest addict of all, yours truly.) Again, not a shred of disagreement here. This is the place. Third, we all agreed that any "revelation" that takes place here ought to be very carefully orchestrated and well thought out, and for reasons that you, more than anyone, ought to appreciate: We want to approach this, and we want it to be understood that we are approaching this, with utmost seriousness. This is to be fundamentally a scholarly event, like our conference in Hawk's Cay was a scholarly event (despite the rather high society treatment given it in yesterday's Times Magazine cover piece by Tony Lukas). Of course, we will also want to contact a goodly portion of the 60 or so media people we always contact when we feel we have a newsworthy item for them, but we want the whole atmosphere to be very serious and scholarly. The media will sensationalize it enough, without any help from us. Fourth, and finally, we should think in terms of a published product in International Security, along the lines we discussed, and which I will describe in more detail below. The bottom line, Dan, is that you/we were taken very seriously, and that door is contingently open to you.

But there are contingencies. Let me spell out the most important ones first, before stating my own views as to the exact time and format in which we ought to try ^{to} do this. The basic problem, as you know, is that no one but you knows about this. This gives the story its marvelous appeal and importance, after all these years, but it has also caused many people whom I know to be very suspicious. My own impression is that they are somewhat suspicious. Part of this, as expressed by Kaysen, Garthoff and Hyland, is that

they just do not believe the event in question actually happened. you are fighting against nearly a quarter-century of thinking that has gone on without this piece of information, and explanations have been put forward by learned people who have become quite comfortable with their hypotheses and quite convinced that they are right. This is only natural, of course. But I think there are two other problems that you and I have to deal with. You know what they are but let me just remind you of them, for the record. First, Garthoff and Hyland (to take ^wto people who have an awful lot of credibility and experience in intelligence matters) find it almost inconceivable that an event of this magnitude and astronomical significance could have occurred and be known only to one person. I think this, more than anything else, is what they find hard to swallow, in advance of seeing the evidence. Bill Hyland told me matter of factly that "it didn't happen; it is a fantasy." And Ray Garthoff, as usual more reticent in his appraisal, said he "knows of no evidence for its having happened." Joe Nye, himself a former Undersecretary of State for a very sensitive issue--non-proliferation--expressed skepticism on these grounds. How, he asked, could only one person "know" such a thing? He said this would be like only one person knowing that, say, the Israelis have nuclear weapons. But this leads directly to the final problem, which you know: Your reputation, undeserved perhaps but nevertheless real in strategic environs, as a person drawn to causes and a person who might make (as Rusk recently accused me in the Times) of making a mountain out of a molehill.* I ought to add that this never came up in discussion with Joe and Dave. Their own skepticism was purely of the variety expressed by Hyland and Garthoff: How in the hell could you and you alone be party to this kind of information? You know all this, of course. But I wanted you to know how these by now familiar arguments played out in the discussions I had with my people here this week.

This leads straightaway to the beginning of a solution, which I understand Janet relayed to you. Roughly, it is this: We need--I need--to receive as soon and as completely as possible the evidence on which your conclusions are based. Furthermore, I need your clearance to discuss, if not to share (though sharing would be better, in my view) this evidence with people whose views on these sorts of questions I trust. These would include Tom Schelling, Dick Neustadt, Bill Hyland, Ray Garthoff, Carl Kaysen and perhaps Bill Taubman (the fellow from Amherst who is writing a "definitive" biography in English of Khrushchev). That would be pretty good group, and I gather from our conversation, and what Janet relayed to me about hers with you, that some such group would be OK with you too. If, therefore, I and my colleagues Joe Nye and Dave Welch become convinced that what we have here is indeed, as you hold, a serious and reasonably convincing argument, one that fully deserves our scholarly attention, then the way will be cleared for beginning to discuss how to break the news in a scholarly forum here at the Kennedy School of Government.

Should they expect to know of SI, at some year ago (23) that became available 2 years after it was generated? As insiders write + read SI histories more than two years after events? (I never saw one!) Which of them has need of SI history analysis of Cuba II?

← such a hypothesis (not a definite "proof" th. Cubans to over SAM, shot down (In fact, there is a proof: a SAM was fired (or that it destroyed U-2 by itself) or that Soudon K...

Written after 1968? (After RFK)

← lead to conclusions helpful to my cause (and damaging to theirs)

Reuther: The President

I think both of us are agreed, and I think we are exactly right, to assume that this information ought to be brought to the world's attention sometime in October, 1987, on the 25th anniversary of the CMC. As an aside, let me say that I spent almost 10 hours on the phone yesterday talking to people who had seen the Times on the Rusk Revelation and I am astonished at just how much attention this anniversary is going to get. Dan, it is going to be positively massive. Archives, TV stations, newspaper chains, NPR, PBS the BBC, the networks, and on and on. All of these people have been calling to ask about ~~how~~ the Rusk thing might fit with events and publications and show that are already well in train. Thus our intuitions have been right all along: Interest in this event will peak in late October of this year. That is when your revelation should come out. After the Times piece by Lukas, and after the Foreign Affairs piece by Joe, Dave and I a couple of weeks later, I think the stage will be set.

Let me reiterate why I absolutely do not think that your information ought to be brought out in a way that connects it with the US-Soviet meeting we are planning October 12-13. There are two reasons. First, honestly, we have no firm idea whether this event is actually going to occur. The Soviets have not responded in a way that gives me confidence. And now there is talk of a summit just before the November 7 celebration of the 70th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution. All the Soviets we have invited will be part of that summit stuff, and thus we may have to abort at the last minute. We are unlikely to know until late September. Second, and far more to the point, these discussions are to be the very first ever conducted of this sort. They will necessarily be general and circumspect. Let me give you an example of what we are looking for. If we ask the question: What caused the Cuban missile crisis, we hear two answers--the Cuban missiles, and the Bay of Pigs. What we want to do in the single day in which these conversations will occur is to begin to understand one another's perspectives. That is about it and even that, if experience is any guide, will be hard as hell. Joe said, and I agree (as I think you did when we talked) that an astonishing revelation such as yours, one with such impact on our view of history and on the Soviets' public relations between themselves and their Cuban allies, will positively swamp anything else we might want to do. So, we all agreed that your revelation ought not only to be treated separately, it ought to come after the conference.

OK. Let me, on the basis of these considerations offer you the following scenario to chew on.

1. You send to me as quickly and completely as you deem necessary some of the evidence and arguments for the credibility of what you would claim as fact in your presentation here.

2. You give me permission to consult with some of the people mentioned previously, namely Schelling, Kaysen, Garthoff, Hyland and perhaps Taubman.
 3. If I am convinced following consulting these people not that you are necessarily correct, but only that this is a set of documents and arguments that warrants serious discussion, then we invite you to CSIA and The Kennedy School of Government to deliver a public lecture.
 4. The lecture would take place, probably, on Monday, October 26, 1987, exactly 25 years to the day after which the event in question occurred. This would give the media present time to get their stories out either for the following day, the fateful 27th, or the day after, which is the 25th anniversary of the resolution of the crisis.
 5. The meeting would take place in the Penthouse of the Kennedy School of Government, moderated by Graham Allison or Joe Nye.
 6. The meeting would be attended by invitation only, by about 60 or so people, making up the cream of the Cambridge arms control community, which includes most of the people who know the most about the events in question.
 7. We will arrange to invite some special guests, such as Garthoff, Hyland, et al.
 8. The format would allow you to speak for approximately one hour, followed by about 2 hours or more of discussion. We would agree on a list of a half-dozen or so people who would be given first crack, and on this list would be Schelling, Neustadt, Garthoff and probably Allison. We could negotiate about others.
 9. We would invite a selective list of media people, from the Times, Post, the networks, PBS and NPR and so on--our usual list. We ought also to have something like a 5-10 page brief that we can distribute ahead of time so that they will get some appreciation of what they are about to be told.
 10. The meeting will be tape recorded. I will edit the proceedings following which, you and I will collaborate on putting together a finished product that we submit to International Security for publication. This ought to put the seal of scholarly approval on it for good. We will have launched one of the most interesting phases of discussion about the CMC on record.
-

As we all saw yesterday, much to my surprise, the Rusk revelation warranted page one on the Times. One can only guess what your revelation will warrant but, coming on the exact anniversary 25 years after the events in question, and after the public has been alerted to the significance of the anniversary about to pass, I would be very optimistic about your having to hold some kind of news conference after the scholarly meeting. I think both aspects are important: The scholarly-ness of the meeting, and the news conference. I know from speaking to you that you have many personal reasons for also believing this. And for my own part, I can, if I take an optimistic slant on things, see this as the beginning of some sort of commitment, mutual and important, between this Center and Dan Ellsberg. Of course, I must leave that vague for now, because we haven't passed the all important hurdle of convincing a skeptical scholarly community--at least convincing them that this is very serious indeed. Anything you can do, and speedily, to help me in this, can only help. If we are shooting for the 25th anniversary, and if we are shooting for the Kennedy School and the audience you and I both want to evaluate your claims, then we really must move fast. I am for my part willing to do whatever I can. This is too important to let slide. I am your willing partner in getting the truth out, to the best of my ability.

I will try to call you at around 3:30 PM or so, California time, on Monday, which ought to be the day this letter arrives at your home. Janet sends her very best. I look forward to our conversation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'J' followed by a series of loops and a final flourish.

James G. Blight

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CENTER FOR SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

James G. Blight
Executive Director
(617) 495-8132

John F. Kennedy School of Government
79 John F. Kennedy Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

August 29, 1987

Dr. Daniel Ellsberg

Dear Dan:

My wife Janet told me last night that she had a very tough time keeping her conversation with you down to about an hour, and that, furthermore, she thought the conversation had to end quite prematurely. I am not surprised. After close to five hours on the horn with you the other day, and after taking--believe it or not--over ^{twenty} two pages of notes during the conversation, I still felt that we had only scratched the surface. I came away with one absolutely certain conclusion: That you are totally convinced that the Cuban takeover occurred and that this event was crucial, perhaps even decisive, in the resolution of the Cuban missile crisis. As I told you then, and as I suppose must have been obvious from your very close reading of my manuscript, the event you believe occurred on October 26-27, 1962 would indeed explain a good deal that I have been unable to account for. That is exactly the event that would, or should, have happened in order to make the quite unexpected and amicable resolution of the missile crisis occur. It is the missing piece of the puzzle, or at any rate, the most important missing piece I have heard of. And that is saying something, because as you are aware, the Cuban missile crisis has lately assumed all the drama and immediacy of contemporary affairs, due to a whole series of revelations lately come to light: From Rusk, from the transcription of the secret tapes of the EXCOMM meetings of October 27, and now this, the Ellsberg Revelation, potentially the most significant of all.

I take it that Janet shared with you some of the results of my preliminary conversations with Joe Nye and Dave Welch about bringing you out to Harvard, to CSIA and the Kennedy School, to break this news to the public. So, forgive me if I go over some familiar ground, but I think it is vitally important to get straight just what I think we ought to do, and why.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CENTER FOR SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

James G. Blight
Executive Director
(617) 495-8132

John F. Kennedy School of Government
79 John F. Kennedy Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

September 5, 1987

Dr. Daniel Ellsberg

Dear Dan:

Since we last talked, I have had a long talk about your situation with Tom Schelling, Janet and I have had dinner with Dick Neustadt, at which we discussed virtually nothing but your case, and Joe Nye and I have consulted with Graham Allison, getting a reading from him as to how to proceed, from his lofty perch as Dean of the Kennedy School. So tonight, as we pack for our long awaited week away from it all in the mountains, I write to you with the results of my Ellsbergian researches.

Let me begin with Tom Schelling and Dick Neustadt, whom you recommended I see first, who have known you for a very long time, and whose judgment I myself often consult and rely on. They agree totally: They have each asked me to say to you that they think coming to KSG or some other Harvard podium to announce the revelation, (and) the argument that goes with it, would be a mistake. Tom was especially insistent on this point. He said that he had talked to you at your 35th class reunion in June and that you told him you had gotten MacArthur money to pursue your book on nuclear crises. Tom said that after so many years of enforced service of the short term on the podium, he thought you were going to have a hard time, as anyone would, sitting down and wading through the material you know so well, and in some cases so uniquely, in order to once again play by the rules of academe. Dick agreed. He feels that your own best interests are just not served by first announcing the revelation, then having the academic community that knows the missile crisis evaluate it. As both Tom and Dick argued to me, this fundamentally inverts the scholarly process, which always proceeds from claim, to evaluation by the small community of people who claim to be able to evaluate the claim, to a published product in which the larger community is let in on the process, to, finally, the publication of the claim as fact to the whole world, if indeed we are dealing with something that is of interest to a great many people. ?!

At the contentual level, both guys felt that your claim is very interesting, just as we both thought they would. Tom was especially intrigued, though even Tom could not quite fathom that you alone, among people knowledgeable about the Cuban missile crisis, should know about the event in question. He said he just could not believe that this was so, though he trusts you enough to keep an open mind on the subject. So does Dick, and so does Joe.

* i.e., publication of a paper is always preceded by a seminar ?!

Publication to "the world" is always after publication in a journal ?!

for am - besides
- are these
"ies"? Did Perle go through this? Did Harvard stand behind the correctness of his "news" - or views?
What seminar speaker has been put through the "pre-seminar review process" on p. 2?

In other words, they would be very glad indeed to get together with you to discuss what you know, what you believe this means and the missile crisis generally.

I related to each of these men as strongly as I could your concern that this information be gotten into the debate around the time of the 25th anniversary of the crisis, as you and I had discussed. They responded in no uncertain terms by saying that, here again, this would defeat your long term goals, as well as put the Kennedy School and Harvard in an untenable position--of assuming that you are correct before really taking the time to evaluate whether this is so. And by "correct," I mean correct in your inferences about what the significance of the revelation is, as well as its actually having happened. As Tom said, with his typically cutting perspicacity, either it happened or it did not. If you are convinced that it did, then it probably did. But the real interest to Tom, and to the rest of the community who study this crisis and all nuclear crises, is in the interpretation of it, which is a necessarily much more deliberate, fuzzy and uncertain process. *And they have to decide whether my intern. is "correct" before inviting me to give an open seminar!*

In conversation with Tom, Dick, Joe and Graham (I could not reach Carl Kaysen), I arrived at this proposition. All agreed, in principle, so see what you think:

1. The very first thing that needs to be done is for you to write something out, even something very rough and ready, and send it to me. Maybe 10-15 pages would do it.

2. I would then send it around to the following people:

Tom Schelling
Dick Neustadt
Ernie May
Carl Kaysen
Graham Allison
Joe Nye

Steve Van Evera } *Editors of International Security*
Sean Lynn-Jones }
Dave Welch } *my co-author; Res. Fellow at this center.*

3. I would consult these people and ask them whether they might like to bring you out to Harvard for an absolutely private seminar, led by you, and attended only by the people I have just listed, in addition to myself (and perhaps one or two others that we might agree upon, such as Ray Garthoff and Bill Hyland).

3. We would then have you out here for a seminar. CSIA would pay all your expenses.

4. You would take whatever you glean from the critical discussion of your position and revelation and transform it into something which you would submit to International Security. The exact form is discussable, but I could see a short document-like article, establishing the existence of the event in question, a short piece by you following this making your claims as to the significance

of your revelation, and commentary from a couple of us evaluating your claims.

5. After the appearance of the pieces in IS, the whole world will know, via our system of media contact, about it. At that point, of course, interviews, and other sorts of media happenings would be in order.

I think the thing that came up most often in my conversations with Dick and Tom is that some such step-wise sequence as this is, they feel, in your own best interest. It brings the community of your former and future colleagues in on the debate, to sharpen, criticize, question and elaborate. But since I am under the impression that this is what you want, I am confident that you will give your former colleagues and teachers a hearing. What do you think?

I understand that this is not quite the letter you thought you would get from yours truly. This is not the letter, to tell you the truth, that I thought I would write. But I had to consult these men, as you know. I cannot do anything at all, of an institutionally endorsed nature, without bringing them on board. Their basic message is this: If you want to be taken seriously by them, and by your former colleagues, you must refrain, for the time being, from stepping up on the podium and pronouncing. That is exactly how they put it. You ought, they told me to tell you, to understand that you must play by their rules if you want this thing to come out in a way that involves them and Harvard. Otherwise, they recommended I inform you, you are free to do as you please, knowing that they won't be party to it. I gather that Tom also had in mind something rather more specific in his effort to do right by you: He wants, I think, to encourage you to overcome your block against writing things out first. He really does, at least that is my impression. *Probably true, for Schelling; but doesn't meet October deadline; Duh...*

One final thought. At dinner with Dick Neustadt a quite extraordinary thing happened. He suddenly said, roughly, "people of my generation cannot ever quite forgive Dan Ellsberg for leaking the Pentagon Papers. I respect his moral right to do so but I just cannot quite bring myself to see things his way." I responded that "people of our generation cannot quite bring ourselves to see Dan Ellsberg as anything other than a hero for doing exactly what he did." And we then had a wonderful dinner. It was quite a moment, as two views clashed and then decided to allow one another their freedom to exist. Further, we both agreed that this revelation is not like those in the Pentagon Papers, at least not in important respects. This is a historical point that needs first of all to be evaluated by scholars, not only because, but partly because, it derives from the same man who gave us the Pentagon Papers. This, in other words--I am trying clumsily to say--is your chance finally, to bring people like Dick all the way around to a full acceptance of Daniel Ellsberg.

These are my thoughts for now. I'll be back in the saddle by September

16.

Sincerely yours (this goes for Janet as well),

Jim

Why would this process, or revelation, do that? (if that were the aim).

Dear Jim -

Your letter has sat on my desk for a month now, causing ~~several~~ ^{many} times to pick it up and read it occasionally as I have suggested as I have suggested and ~~hesitated to do so~~ ^{hesitated to do so} it. ^{In your own words,} ~~As you said,~~ it was not quite the letter I expected; indeed, I have never imagined getting a letter quite like it. As one friend commented, "Now that glenn has come to Moscow, maybe someday it will come to Cambridge."

I'm writing, finally, just to ^{to tell you} ~~say~~ that I don't hold the message against the messenger. ~~Also~~ ^{that} that you ~~was~~ ^{are} in a difficult position and I have the highest ^{confidence in} ~~respect for~~ ^{respect for} your own intentions and efforts in this regard. I very much enjoyed our ^{last} ~~substantive~~ ^{substantive} conversation, as I'm sure you could tell, and I look forward to continuing them at ~~some~~ ^{greater} length, if you'll let me and point me up to it, when I'm in Cambridge. Or, as you originally proposed, you are both welcome to stay with us if you come to Berkeley, and we can talk through the night. (Not that I do that very often - but it ~~seems~~ ^{is} to go that way with us).

R

I've been working hard on the CMC as a case study for my MacArthur Foundation research project, stimulated by our first conversation and your manuscript - thanks you! - ^{so} ~~and~~ I would be glad to get the ~~materials~~ ^{your} "case package" you promised (the October 27 transcript, the Murder memo, the Rose letter and the ^{transcription and background} ~~interview~~ ^{book} is available of the Hanks by deposition). But if some hitch has developed, I'd be glad to see the ~~materials~~ ^{materials}.

~~The particular point~~

~~at the particular point~~

I will be ~~in Cambridge~~ giving a lecture at
Andover on Thursday ~~at~~ at 8 which I just
inform you, ~~with the thought~~ though that may be a bit far to come,
I may also give a session at Tufts on Wednesday, ~~for~~
~~at~~ at the invitation of Mary Sherrin; ~~at which~~ I'm sure
you would be very welcome, and I would like to ~~very~~
have you at it. Mostly, though, we need to talk
together.

up all night last Oct 3,
writing diff. letter to Blight;
call Kline, then Sherrin, Sunday
4 Oct; SH confirm No; Kline
calls from Havana;

1 Oct 87 JH

[notes on assumption that

To Blight:

SH will release — or Oct 2? Oct 3
there were described on Fair, Oct 2; (or O-Memo 12-1)
recommended today, 5 Oct; he will
give WP. Blight proposes 1 + 2

big Nerd:
letter was
informing;
not the way
from people
able to reach;
talked to me
like a child
(a, an unconvincing
student or
applicant/sufficient
(judge to convicted
below)

S & N are right — a public review is not the
way for me to release this info
- for me, or for Howard
- primarily because I ^{can't} ~~can't~~ reveal my evidence
(later PP!) without endangering myself and Howard
(= RAND)
- yet evidence is needed, for proper report.

But the same applies to Blight Proposal 3:
paper, printed review, publication;
which would also be too slow to enlarge the
debate this fall. ("Lesson learned" is left-Now
will stick for quite a while, give brief, intense
public attention.

Still S & N — thanks — but all proposals come from one of myself — "Bill
Woodward"

Only solution to my narrow aim:

- formalistic investigation (of x) (academic, "official"
approach can't get at these data, probably,
and couldn't afford, institutionally, to publish it!)

(S & N)

- Open mind of me, etc.

~~Full from to circles of WGBH through~~
(and) to anyone

I will gladly share my conclusions + interp
with anyone now, so they can relate to it as a
hypothesis (Can understand why Blight found it plausible
enough without precise evidence).

- Please read...

Hoping to participate in, or lead, review discussion.

- Letter (or any time) review — NO resolutions, no press —
on "Cuba II. Model IV" or VN '65, '69-73. Am Rev. Model IV

Dr. James G. Blight
Center for Science and International Affairs
Harvard University

October 3, 1987

Dear Jim,

It has been very hard for me to know how to respond to your letter of September 5. If the reasons for my puzzlement are not obvious, it might help you to reread it alongside your letter of August 29, as I have just done.

The two respective proposals, of course, are sharply at odds. As I understand your most recent letter (I must say that I am tempted to follow Robert Kennedy in ignoring the later letter and addressing only the earlier one!) your own initial proposal, based on discussions with Nye, Welch and others, was, in effect, vetoed by Neustadt and Schelling (and perhaps Allison, whose views you did not mention separately). In other words, from an organizational point of view (Model II), I gather that you made the somewhat embarrassing discovery that your enthusiastic overtures and suggestions to me, though avowedly tentative, were premature, with respect to clearance from these senior members.

I have no need to argue with their negative judgements. I know that their concern is sincere, I appreciate their thinking about what is best for me, as well as for the Kennedy School, and I can agree with much that they say. But I am left thinking that your original proposal (of August 29) was more worthy of consideration--though that is now neither here nor there--and that the latest proposed procedure is not really appropriate, though I have regard for your intentions.

In one respect, which may have shaped the tone of some of the comments, Neustadt and Schelling seem to have misunderstood the situation. Their "message" to me that "If you [Ellsberg] want this thing to come out in a way that involves them and Harvard..." suggests strongly that they are under the misapprehension that the idea that I come to Harvard and address a public seminar--as the forum for the findings and analysis I would like to inject into public discussion, preferably this fall--came from me, as a suggestion or request, rather than, tentatively but energetically, as a proposal from Harvard, i.e., from you. Perhaps you could clarify this for them.

The fact is that I have no special desire to involve them or Harvard in any of this--I was glad to hear your interest and your encouragement to consider Harvard as the place to release my findings, but it was only your proposals that raised the issue in my mind--and from your latest letter it is clear that this would be inappropriate.

.

I don't mean to be offhand in rejecting your new proposal, which I know is sincerely meant and, I'm sure, reflects some effortful negotiating on your part. I think it is enough to say that it does not seem to me truly to reflect "rules of the game" of academic scholarship and public education as I have long been familiar with these--most recently, as Regent's Lecturer at the University of California, Irvine, in faculty seminars at the Universities of Chicago, Irvine and Stanford, or as an invited speaker at the American Philosophical Association meetings--nor, let me guess, does it correspond to rules laid down for other speakers at your Harvard-MIT Avoiding Nuclear War seminars or other seminars. But it does have the ring, surprisingly, of rules and procedures even more familiar to me from my past life among consultants to or officials of the national security establishment. That milieu is long behind me, by my choice.

Without going into an argument here I think these points will come through clearly if you compare your criteria for inviting someone to give an open seminar in your earlier letter--quite appropriate to academia, it seems to me--with the criteria and the procedure prescribed in the latest letter.

To mention just one point, I can't make anything out of the assertion that such an invitation to address a public seminar (which is not, in fact, ordinarily required to be preceded by "an absolutely private seminar") amounts to an "assumption" by the sponsors of the seminar, in advance of hearing the presentation, that it is "correct" in its interpretation--whatever that could mean--and/or in its facts.

Perhaps that refers to the aspect of inviting journalists and encouraging reportage: again, your own suggestion, agreeable to me but not my idea or requirement for leading a discussion. Could it be that the adverse reaction was mainly predicated on that aspect of publicity? Yet from what you told me that seems to correspond to regular practice at the particular seminar which you initially mentioned, the Harvard-MIT AWP Discussion Group. Did Harvard accept responsibility for the "correctness" of Richard Perle's presentation, or "assume" it (or vet it) in advance? If so--I can't resist asking--how did that work out? (Of course, I understand the rules might be different for novelists). But that is only one of a number of puzzles, which don't, as a whole, seem worth addressing at this point.

Of course, I would be happy to take part in any discussions of the Crisis or other matters at the Kennedy School or your Center, informally or as seminar participant or presenter, whenever that could be coordinated with a trip East, which shouldn't be hard to arrange; just give me the word (or I can let you know in advance when I will be East).

Since I am concentrating on the Crisis as the first case study I am examining for my MacArthur Foundation research, I

would greatly appreciate getting the materials you offered to send me--the October 27 transcript to appear in IS, the Rusk letter, the Meeker memorandum, and whatever is available of the Hawk's Key discussion (I take it these are all in process of publication, with the possible exception of the last). Of course, if some hitch has developed with respect to providing any of these, I will wait to see them in print.

Please give my warm regards to my old friends and colleagues, and above all to Janet. I enjoyed our long, substantive phone conversations very much, as I'm sure you could tell, and I look forward to even longer discussions with you and Janet when I'm in Cambridge.

October 7, 1987

Dear Jim,

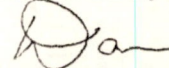
As you may have guessed, you haven't heard from me because I found it very hard to think of a worthwhile way to respond to your last letter, or its proposal.

I'm writing you hastily now to invite you to a small seminar I'll be addressing this coming Wednesday at Tufts, set up at the last moment at the request of Marty Sherwin, since I will be in the area to give a lecture at Amherst on October 15. Marty can give you the details if you're available, as I hope (Janet too, of course). It will be on the subject of our mutual interest.

I've been working hard on the Cuban Missile Crisis for the last month, stimulated by our first phone call--thank you!--as a first focus for my MacArthur Foundation research project. (In that connection I would be happy to get the "care package" you offered). A good deal of independent corroboration has turned up for the several pieces of evidence that underly my hypothesis on the resolution of the crisis, so there may be less trouble in the future in having it taken seriously for discussion and analysis.

I think that you and Janet would be interested in either the Tufts seminar or the Amherst lecture, but if you feel overdosed on seminars next week, I very much hope we can all find time to continue our phone conversations in person while I'm in the area. I'll bring my annotated copy of your manuscript for further inducement.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Dan", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Daniel Ellsberg

October 7, 1987

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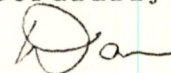
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Daniel Ellsberg